

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 05400 112238Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1545
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
USCINSCO J2 QUARRY HEIGHTS
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY QUITO

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T (PARAS 2,3,4,AND5.)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, BL
SUBJECT: EARLY BOLIVIAN ELECTION RETURNS GIVE PEREDA NARROW LEAD

1. SUMMARY: EARLY ELECTION RETURNS, ALMOST ALL FROM THE CITIES, GIVE JUAN PEREDA, THE PRO-GOVERNMENT CANDIDATE, A NARROW EDGE OVER THE MAJOR OPPOSITION CANDIDATE HERNAN SILES ZUAZO WITH THE OTHER OPPOSITION CANDIDATES TRAILING FAR BEHIND. WHILE PEREDA IS SHOWING SOME STRENGTH THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY VARIOUS OPPOSITION CANDIDATES ARE DEMONSTRATING CONCENTRATED REGIONAL STRENGTH WHICH COULD GAIN THEM SUBSTANTIAL REPRESENTATION IN THE CONGRESS. RESULTS ARE COMING IN VERY SLOWLY, HOWEVER, AND NO SIGNIFICANT RETURNS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE WHERE THE MAJORITY OF THE BOLIVIAN ELECTORATE RESIDES.

END SUMMARY.

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2. WITH ONLY ABOUT 20 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE COUNTED UNOFFICIAL RESULTS GIVE JUAN PEREDA OF THE UNP THE LEAD WITH APPROXIMATELY 40 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE. IN SECOND PLACE IS HERNAN SILES ZUAZO OF THE UDP WITH 34 PERCENT, FOLLOWED BY VICTOR PAZ ESTENSSORO OF THE MRN-H/PRA WITH 14 PERCENT AND REENE BERNAL OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY WITH NEARLY 7 PERCENT. HOWEVER, THESE RESULTS ARE ALMOST ALL FROM THE

URBAN AREAS AND SIGNIFICANT RETURNS FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE WHERE THE MAJORITY OF THE BOLIVIAN ELECTORATE RESIDE AND WHERE THE ELECTION WILL ULTIMATELY BE DECISDED HAVE NOT YET COME IN.

3. THE EARLY RETURNS WERE ANNOUNCED BY TWO RADIO STATIONS WHO HAD PLACED OBSERVERS IN THE KEY DEPARTMENTAL CAPITALS IN AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL COVERAGE DURING ELECTION DAY. HOWEVER, THIS SPECIAL ELECTION COVERAGE HAS SINCE ENDED AND WE HAVE BECOME DEPENDENT UPON THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION WHICH HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING ONLY EXTREMELY SLOWLY AND HAVE ADDED LITTLE TO THE UNOFFICIAL RESULTS ABOVE.

4. WHILE THE EARLY RETURNS INDICATE THAT JUAN PEREDA IS RUNNING WELL THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, THE THREE PRINCIPLE OPPOSITION CANDIDATES ARE DEMONSTRATING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN REGIONAL STRENGTH. THUS PEREDA IS WINNING IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF SANTA CRUZ, THE BENI, AND THE PANDO AND RUNNING SECOND IN ALL OF THE OTHER DEPARTMENTS. IN CONTRAST, HOWEVER, WHILE HERNAN SILES ZUAZO IS AHEAD IN THE LARGE DEPARTMENTS OF CHUQUISACA, POTOSI, AND VERY NARROWLY IN LA PAZ, HE IS RUNNING RELATIVELY POORLY IN ALL THE OTHER DEPARTMENTS. SIMILARLY RENE BERNAL IS RUNNING EITHER FIRST OR SECOND IN COCHABAMBA AND ORURO BUT IS NOT A FACTOR ELSEWHERE. VICTOR PAZ IS WINNING IN TARIJA, HIS HOME DEPARTMENT, AND RUNNING WELL IN THE BENI AND SANTA CRUZ

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(SECOND PLACE), BUT IS RUNNING POORLY IN SEVERAL OF THE OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

5. THIS REGIONAL STRENGTH COULD ENABLE PAZ, BERNAL AND SILES, DESPITE RELATIVELY LOW NATIONAL VOTE TOTALS, TO WIN ONE OR MORE DEPARTMENTS EACH, AND THUS CAPTURE THE MAJORITY OF THESE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATIONS. THEREFORE, IF PEREDA FAILS TO WIN THE MAJORITY OF THE TOTAL POPULAR VOTE, HE COULD ALSO FAIL TO WIN A MAJORITY IN THE CONGRESS, WHICH WOULD THEN ELECT THE NEW PRESIDENT. IN THIS CASE, PEREDA AND SILES WOULD BOTH ENTER INTO HECTIC COALITION NEGOTIATIONS WITH PAZ AND BERNAL, WHO WOULD BECOME THE KINGMAKERS.

BOEKER

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